

DRAFT AS OF JULY 23, 2000

PREPARED STATEMENT OF

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Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Maloney, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Once again, I am pleased to be here to give an update on Census 2000 operations. We have now completed the basic enumeration of Census 2000, a massive undertaking that involved, among other things, all the steps in building an address list containing 120 million housing units; establishing, staffing, and maintaining a field network that includes 520 local census offices; building more than 100,000 partnerships and designing and placing about \$170 million of paid advertising to generate support and cooperation; mailing or delivering questionnaires to every housing unit on the mailing list; recruiting an army of census workers--about 960,000 individuals have been hired and trained since the census began; and conducting about a dozen separate operations to make sure that every housing unit on our list and people who do not live in regular housing or who have no usual home are counted.

COMPLETION OF NONRESPONSE FOLLOWUP

Since I last testified, we have completed the nonresponse followup operation in all 12 regional offices. This enormous task, which involved visiting and enumerating about 42 million housing units, was completed on June 27, slightly ahead of the scheduled completion date. In part, this was due to the fact that we had some 4 million fewer housing units to visit than we originally expected because the mail response was higher than expected. But this success was also due to three other things:

- ! First, the Congress' support and vision in providing sufficient resources to offer attractive pay rates to temporary census workers--from \$8.25 to \$18.50 for enumerators--and to allow us to front-load the hiring of enumerators. By front-load, I mean that we were able to train and give assignments to twice as many people as we needed. This meant that we had staff to offset attrition.

DRAFT AS OF JULY 23, 2000

- ! Second, the dedication, enthusiasm, and resourcefulness of the census workers, who braved tough neighborhoods and, in a few cases, tragic circumstances to get the job done. For many this was more than a job, it was a mission to help their communities have a good count. We were able to hire an excellent cadre of managers for our local census offices, again due in large part to the competitive wage rates. We selected managers with demonstrated ability to manage time-critical operations, ability to establish working relationships with traditionally hard-to-enumerate populations, and the ability to supervise, organize, and communicate.
- ! Third, the residual effect of the advertising campaign that contributed to achieving a 66 percent mail-response rate and the fact that we continued to advertise during nonresponse followup. In fact, we had originally intended to advertise only during the first 4 weeks of nonresponse followup but extended that an additional 4 weeks, using savings from cost efficiencies in the early phases of the advertising campaign. We also continued to involve partners in census efforts. Through the *Because You Count* campaign we provided state, local, tribal, and community partners materials they could use to increase participation with census enumerators when they came knocking on doors. Because of these extra efforts, enumerators experienced limited outright hostility or resistance.

We are rightfully proud of this success in completing nonresponse followup on schedule, which is explained by the factors I just discussed--sufficient resources, excellent recruiting, and public cooperation. I know there have been some concerns expressed that we systematically rushed to complete nonresponse followup early but I do not believe there are any facts to support this conclusion. In fact, the interim data we have made available to the Congress on proxy rates indicate just the opposite--that the Census Bureau did an excellent job of obtaining information directly from each housing unit. These interim data show that we obtained data directly from 97 percent of housing units--that is, by mail, telephone, Internet, or personal interview. For only about 3 percent of housing units did enumerators, after having exhausted procedures to make up to six attempts to obtain an interview, get the information from another knowledgeable source, such as a neighbor or building manager.

When you consider the highly mobile and active lifestyle of Americans today, this is an incredible achievement. The 3 percent are not all refusals; in fact most are simply cases where the enumerator couldn't find anyone at home. Take the case of a person who lives alone, who works long hours, then goes to the gym or to dinner with a friend after work, and perhaps doesn't get home until 10:00 p.m. or later. Should we spend the resources to keep trying to contact that person? Should we simply forget him and leave him out of the census? Or should the enumerator knock on the neighbor's door and obtain what information he can from a source who, in all likelihood, knows quite a bit about the person they live next to. So it is important to note

DRAFT AS OF JULY 23, 2000

that not only is the proxy level low but proxy information is better than no information at all, and in most cases it is perfectly adequate information.

The real issue of concern to us is whether our pre-specified procedures--which, I believe, are robust and entail reasonable efforts to assure a complete enumeration--have been followed. As I will describe in more detail later, whenever we have seen evidence of irregularities, we have taken appropriate corrective action. Such cases have constituted only a tiny fraction of the overall nonresponse followup workload. The Census Bureau does not condone, and certainly does not encourage, shortcuts.

QUALITY COUNTS

Now, I want to discuss current activities, given the fact that the basic enumeration is completed. The completion of nonresponse followup and the basic census enumeration does not signal the end of the census. We continue to conduct review, verification, and clean up work in the field to improve coverage and the census estimate. This "Quality Counts" program will continue into September. Were we to conclude the census with the completion of nonresponse followup, we would provide an estimate of the population that is less than can be achieved by conducting the series of operations that make up the "Quality Counts" program.

At the last operational hearing, I discussed two large planned operations that will improve census coverage. These are the coverage edit followup operation and the coverage improvement followup operation. I will now provide an update on the status of these operations. Then I will discuss several other efforts to improve the estimate. All of the operations I am about to discuss are made possible because of the factors contributing to our successful completion of the basic enumeration that I described earlier. Because we had sufficient resources, good staff, and public cooperation, we were able to complete nonresponse followup on schedule (and earlier than in 1990). Now, we can use our better enumerators to undertake coverage improvement operations in a timely fashion.

Coverage Edit Followup.--The coverage edit followup operation, which began in early May is now about two-thirds complete; the total workload is approximately 2.3 million cases. We now expect to complete this operation in mid-August. It is an important coverage check being conducted by telephone from 13 calling centers around the country. The trained telephone agents are calling two types of households for which we have the telephone numbers. The first are those households for which responses were received by mail or Internet and there are what we call "population count discrepancies." A "population count discrepancy" occurs when there is a difference between the number of persons in the household that the respondent reported in Question 1 ("How many people were living or staying in this house, apartment, or mobile home on April 1, 2000?") and the number of persons for which data were reported. We are also using this process to follow up on households with more than six people. The census questionnaire

DRAFT AS OF JULY 23, 2000

only has room to report data for six people, so it is important that in this operation we collect data

for the additional members of these large households, so their characteristics can be included in the census.

Coverage Improvement Followup Operation.--We are conducting the coverage improvement followup operation, which has a total workload of about 8.7 million housing units, in waves. The first wave included 342 of the local census offices that had completed nonresponse followup as of June 15. Enumerators began field work for this first wave in the last week of June and the work is now nearly complete. Wave 2 field work is being conducted now in 175 local census offices. The work in the remaining 3 offices will begin in a few weeks.

The coverage improvement followup operation can be thought of as a final, essential cleanup operation that rechecks some of the enumerators' earlier work and enumerates some housing units that were added to our address list too late to be included in earlier operations. For example, enumerators will recheck some housing units that were identified as vacant or that were deleted during nonresponse followup. Census Bureau experience from previous censuses indicates that some enumerators erroneously classify occupied housing units as vacant or delete them, so this is an important step to assure a full and accurate census. Enumerators will visit for the first time housing units that were added in our "new construction" program, which was a partnership effort with local governments conducted in the spring of this year. And they will enumerate some housing units added during update/leave or the appeals process for the local update of census addresses, as well as households that submitted blank forms.

The coverage improvement field work is scheduled to last 3 weeks in each wave. Procedures and quality controls are very similar to those for the nonresponse followup operation, including the requirement that enumerators make up to six attempts to find someone at a housing unit that appears to be occupied.

Additional Efforts to Improve Coverage.--Now, I want to discuss a number of additional efforts we are undertaking to have the most complete census estimate possible. As I mentioned earlier, the Congress' commitment to providing adequate resources to conduct Census 2000, the public's cooperation both with the mail-out and during the nonresponse followup operation, and the dedication of temporary census staff have all contributed to our being in a position to conduct a number of final clean-up operations. As operations are completed, we review the data, and where we notice anomalies we take appropriate actions. Let me discuss these operations now.

- ! When we noticed that several local census offices in the Chicago region had fallen seriously behind in the completion of nonresponse followup, we worked closely with Mayor Daley and other city officials to increase public awareness and cooperation with the census. At the city's request, we extended our telephone questionnaire assistance operation for several weeks so that city residents could

DRAFT AS OF JULY 23, 2000

get answers to questions they might have or could provide their census information to telephone agents.

- ! Late in the process, our records indicated that we had not received completed questionnaires for about three dozen military vessels, some of them large carriers, as part of our enumeration of the U.S. military. Failure to include the troops on these vessels in the counts for the ships' home port would have resulted in deficient counts for several U.S. port cities. Working closely with Members' offices and the Department of the Navy, we were able to successfully complete this operation.
- ! We are conducting a residual followup operation to enumerate about 136,000 housing units. These are addresses that were enumerated in nonresponse followup but for which we did not receive a response either by questionnaire, over the Internet, or by telephone.
- ! We also have about 83,000 addresses that were from early vintages of the U.S. Postal Service's delivery sequence file that were geographically coded too late for inclusion in nonresponse followup. As geocoding work is a continual process, we now know the locations for these addresses, so we want to include them in the census. Before we enumerate any of these, the local census offices will check appropriate records to determine whether any of these addresses were added and enumerated as part of earlier field operations. Those addresses not already accounted for will be enumerated.
- ! We are going to revisit some 750,000 housing units that nonresponse followup enumerators classified as occupied but for which they were unable to obtain a population count. In past censuses we have imputed data for these types of cases, and that is the plan for Census 2000, as well. However, we are concerned that the volume of these "population unknown" cases is higher than in 1990. In part, this may be due to the fact that we emphasized that enumerators were not to "guess" what the population count for an address was. We are sending all of these cases back to the field to make a further attempt to gain a more complete interview. This field work began this week.
- ! Finally, we have a planned operation called "field verification" in which enumerators verify the existence of certain addresses that did not match to our geographic files. These include some addresses from the Be Counted program, telephone questionnaire assistance, the group quarters enumeration (when people in group quarters claimed that they lived in a regular housing unit and gave us the address of the housing unit), and certain other addresses for which we have conflicting information about whether they exist.

Re-Enumeration of Selected Cases in a Handful of Local Census Offices--Now I want to discuss problems that affected three South Florida local census offices and five other offices around the country. Our efforts in these offices demonstrate that our highest priority in Census 2000 is a

DRAFT AS OF JULY 23, 2000

quality count. We are keeping our commitment to stay in the field until we are confident we have done our job, and to exhaust every procedure designed to produce a better census.

After the nonresponse followup operation was completed in the Hialeah local census office, enumerators from the Hialeah office were sent to two other local census offices--Homestead and Broward County South--to help complete the nonresponse followup work in those offices. Later, it was determined that the enumerators from the Hialeah office were using incorrect procedures. These incorrect procedures compromised the integrity of the data in the Hialeah local census office area and in the parts of the other two offices where Hialeah enumerators worked. We have undertaken an intensive review of data for these areas and have taken corrective steps as follows:

For the Homestead local census office, we have completed the re-enumeration of 1,400 of the 7,000 cases that Hialeah enumerators completed. These were cases where proxy data had clearly been accepted too early or had other indications that procedures had been misapplied. For the remaining 5,600 housing units, enumerators from the Homestead office have re-enumerated a one-fourth sample of housing units in each assignment area. These re-enumerated cases are currently being matched to the original enumeration (conducted by enumerators from Hialeah) to check data quality. If this check indicates that data quality standards were not met by the original enumerators, the entire assignment area will be re-enumerated. It is not necessary to re-enumerate the entire Homestead local census office area because there is no indication that data quality was compromised prior to using enumerators from the Hialeah office.

Enumerators from Hialeah completed 3,200 cases in the Broward County South local census office in late May. Management from the Broward County South local census office found evidence that indicated to them that questionnaires may have been falsified. We have re-enumerated all 3,200 cases and we do not believe any additional re-enumeration is necessary in that office.

For the Hialeah local census office, we have fully re-enumerated 20 percent of the nonresponse followup workload for the city of Hialeah that fell in specific areas where the local census manager had incorrectly instituted modified and unapproved procedures that allowed the enumerators to record the bare minimum of data--the unit status and population count--prior to the start of "final attempt" procedures. For the remainder of the city of Hialeah, we re-enumerated a sample of cases and matched that to the original enumeration as a check on data quality. As a result of this match, we decided to re-enumerate all of the nonresponse followup cases for the entire Hialeah local census office. That workload is about 63,000, after factoring out late mail returns. Address files are being prepared and materials are being staged for this re-enumeration effort.

We have worked closely with state and local officials to prepare the population of the jurisdictions that will be recounted. I have issued an apology to residents of the Hialeah area, who will have to be re-visited even though they may have already cooperated with an earlier nonresponse followup enumerator. We are putting in place specialized media, promotion, and partnership efforts to remind residents that it is in their best interests to cooperate with this recount so that they will have the most accurate count possible of their area.

DRAFT AS OF JULY 23, 2000

This is not something we like to do, but we feel it is necessary to achieve an accurate count. The good news is that we are confident there are no other Hialeah's among the 520 local census offices. This office is an outlier, and while it is to be regretted, it is also to be expected that with 520 local census office there will be outliers--if not of this kind, then offices that have to be re-

enumerated because of fire, natural disaster, or the like.

We have conducted or are in the process of conducting limited re-enumeration in five other local census offices--Chicago West, Chicago Near North, Marion County, Indiana, Rockville, Maryland, and Monrovia, California. In all, we estimate we will re-enumerate about 20,000 cases in these five offices combined. Our internal analysis indicated that the first four offices had high levels of cases for which minimal data had been accepted from respondents. We reviewed the cases in these offices and found that a significant portion of the reported cases were due to coding errors by the enumerators. That is, they had actually collected sufficient information but had incorrectly marked the box on the questionnaire that indicated they had only obtained minimal data. Still, there were a number of cases where minimal data had been accepted that we determined should be re-enumerated. We are re-enumerating selected cases in the Monrovia local census office because of evidence that they had falsely been classified as "vacant" when, in fact, enumerators had not even visited the units.

ACCURACY AND COVERAGE EVALUATION

The coverage edit followup, coverage improvement followup, additional efforts to improve coverage I just discussed, and re-enumeration of selected cases are designed to exhaust all census procedures to correct localized problems and improve census coverage. Still, despite all of these efforts, the Census Bureau does not anticipate that Census 2000 will have better coverage than the 1990 census because many of the factors that led to the undercount in 1990 are still present in American society today. The Accuracy and Coverage Evaluation (A.C.E.) will provide a final quality check on how well we have done in the initial census and will provide the means to generate a more accurate count. I have testified in May in some detail on A.C.E. operations, so now will give an update on the current operation--personal visit interviewing.

To provide sufficient data to compare the A.C.E. to the initial census, the Census Bureau must conduct interviews to collect data from each of the housing units that were independently listed in the A.C.E. listing operation. We initiated the interviewing with a telephone phase in late April and completed about 90,000 interviews by telephone, or about 29 percent of the total workload of about 314,000 cases. We did not start personal visit interviewing during nonresponse followup to preserve independence between the A.C.E. and the initial census enumeration.

Personal visit interviewing began in late June and has progressed very well. Including both telephone and personal visit interviews, we have now completed over 90 percent of the A.C.E. interviewing workload.

Personal interviews are conducted only with a household member during the first 3 weeks that the case is available for interviewing. If an interview with a household member is not obtained after 3 weeks, interviewers will attempt to interview another knowledgeable person. During the latter part of the operation, the best interviewers are used to convert as many noninterview cases

DRAFT AS OF JULY 23, 2000

as possible to completed interviews, either by talking to a household member or another knowledgeable person. This nonresponse conversion has been planned to improve the completeness of data for matching. We planned to complete personal visit interviewing in early September but we have extended the completion date to September 24 to accommodate the

completion of work in Hialeah.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my testimony. I will now answer any questions.